

La Costa Avenue Improvement Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the city developing an improvement plan for La Costa?

La Costa Avenue is a secondary arterial that links eastern Carlsbad with Interstate 5 and the coast. The road was developed when the La Costa area was part of the County of San Diego, prior to being annexed to the City of Carlsbad in 1972. Over the years, traffic has increased along the heavily traveled road. Residential driveways have direct access onto the road, which has a 45-mile-per-hour speed limit, creating safety concerns for residents entering and exiting driveways, especially during busy traffic times.

The city has taken steps to improve safety, including installing warning signs near residential driveways, posting more speed limit signs and installing digital signs that tell drivers how fast they are going. Traffic engineers say more changes should be made to balance the needs of motorists with the quality of life for those who live in the neighborhood. The City of Carlsbad will develop a community-preferred plan for La Costa Avenue between El Camino Real and Rancho Santa Fe Road that will guide future improvements to traffic safety and livability along the street.

What is the city's objective for this study?

The study objective is to develop a cost effective, community-preferred plan to address traffic speeds and safety on La Costa Avenue in a way that respects the residential character and arterial function of the roadway.

What are the major issues the city wants to address?

The planning process will consider a variety of different factors that define the nature and operation of La Costa Avenue:

- Function as a secondary arterial
- Residential frontage
- Traffic speed
- Safety
- Emergency response
- Bikes and pedestrians
- Costs of improvements
- Enforcement

The city has developed a survey to help determine the issues of greatest importance to the community. This survey was mailed to residents on and around La Costa Avenue, and was posted on the city's website for the larger community to provide input.

What kinds of changes to La Costa Avenue will the city look at?

Some of the options the city will ask the community to consider are roundabouts, traffic signals, changing the number of lanes, landscaped medians, and adding sidewalks and bike lanes. The kinds of improvements will be defined by how well they address the major issues the city and the community identify as the most important, by the preferences expressed through the survey responses and at community meetings, and by the costs associated with various options and the available funding.

Can the city make changes to La Costa Avenue without an environmental review?

Because an important goal of this project is to reduce vehicle speed on La Costa Avenue, the solutions being considered could potentially result in increased congestion. The city has therefore determined that an environmental review is necessary before any permanent improvements are constructed on La Costa Avenue. This environmental review would include an analysis of traffic congestion under current and forecasted conditions. The environmental review would also identify any potential traffic impacts that might occur from traffic that might be rerouted to roadway segments in adjacent neighborhoods. Staff is considering conducting this environmental review as part of the General Plan Update currently underway.

What happened to ideas previously discussed with the neighborhood?

In the past few years, the city has responded to safety concerns along La Costa Avenue by installing additional warning signs, speed limit signs and digital speed displays. The city also worked with a group of residents to discuss other options to address speed and safety concerns along the street. These ideas, including installing roundabouts and restriping the street to two through-lanes with a median, turn lanes and bike lanes, will continue to be discussed in this planning process.

Why is the city developing a restriping plan at the same time?

The Carlsbad City Council directed transportation engineering to develop an interim striping plan to address safety and liability concerns on La Costa Avenue. It is anticipated that a restriping plan or any option that changes the lane configuration would be considered as part of the ultimate plan for La Costa Avenue. A restriping plan could serve as an interim solution on La Costa Avenue and would require further study to determine its consistency with the city's General Plan and environmental regulations.

How would the city fund improvements to La Costa Avenue?

The cost of the community-preferred plan will be determined through the planning process. The city has already set aside \$1 million for additional traffic signals on La Costa Avenue. These funds could be applied to other improvements on La Costa Avenue, as defined by the improvement plan, which might include traffic signals or other improvements that would address the operation and safety of the street. As the plan is developed, costs will be one consideration. It is anticipated that the ultimate plan could cost significantly more than the funds currently available. The plan will provide the ultimate vision for improvements and

additional funding will need to be identified in order to implement improvements beyond the available funding.

Does the city need to install the signals currently in the capital improvement plan?

The signals are consistent with the current General Plan and Circulation Element. Although the signals would address traffic flow at specific locations, they would not achieve the goal for the La Costa Avenue Traffic Improvement Plan to develop a cost effective, community-preferred plan to address traffic speeds and safety on La Costa Avenue in a way that respects the residential character and arterial function of the roadway. The city will consider traffic signals as an option during the planning process.

How can I get more involved in the planning process?

Carlsbad property owners, residents, businesses and anyone else who is interested in helping to develop the plan for La Costa Avenue are invited to participate in a series of three community meetings from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on:

- Thursday, April 28
- Thursday, May 26
- Thursday, June 23

at the Stagecoach Community Center, 3420 Camino De Los Coches.

Additional information and opportunities for input are also available on the city's website at <http://www.carlsbadca.gov/services/traffic/Pages/LaCostaAvenueImprovementPlan.aspx>

Additional Questions

If you have additional questions about this project, please contact Doug Bilse at 760-602-7504 or doug.bilse@carlsbadca.gov